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**Hidden Players in a Deadly Game:  
Biological Warfare Capabilities Worldwide**

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**Key Judgments**

Many countries are discovering that with the technologies available today, biological weapons are potentially one of the most lethal weapons of mass destructive ever developed.

- o Biological agents can cause mass fatalities with relatively small expenditure of time and resources.
- o Biological weapons provide the broadest area coverage per pound of payload of any weapon system.
- o Production of biological weapons is difficult to detect.
- o Use of biological weapons can be masked in many ways, so that the user may not necessarily be detected.
- o No effective defense exists against biological weapons.

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Any country with a modestly developed industrial base and a reasonably mature defense industry can establish a biological warfare (BW) capability--if it chooses to do so. Any nation--and possibly some terrorist groups--could develop and deploy biological agents. And never before have so many nations possessed offensive biological warfare programs (see figure 1):

o The Soviets have had a BW program since the 1950s.

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We cannot be certain that still other countries do not have BW programs.

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Biological warfare programs generally are developed in countries that already have well established chemical warfare (CW) programs; this is particularly true in the Third World. And, as with the spread of chemical weapons, one country's initiation of a BW program often induces a regional rival to follow suit.

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The development of new technologies--such as molecular biology and genetic engineering--is also creating an increasing interest in BW.

o Toxins that are highly flexible for use have become quick and inexpensive to develop and produce. (For example, several countries in the Middle East are developing botulinus toxin--the causative agent of botulism--as a biological warfare agent. With modern

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equipment, large quantities of the toxin can be made  
within days.)

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